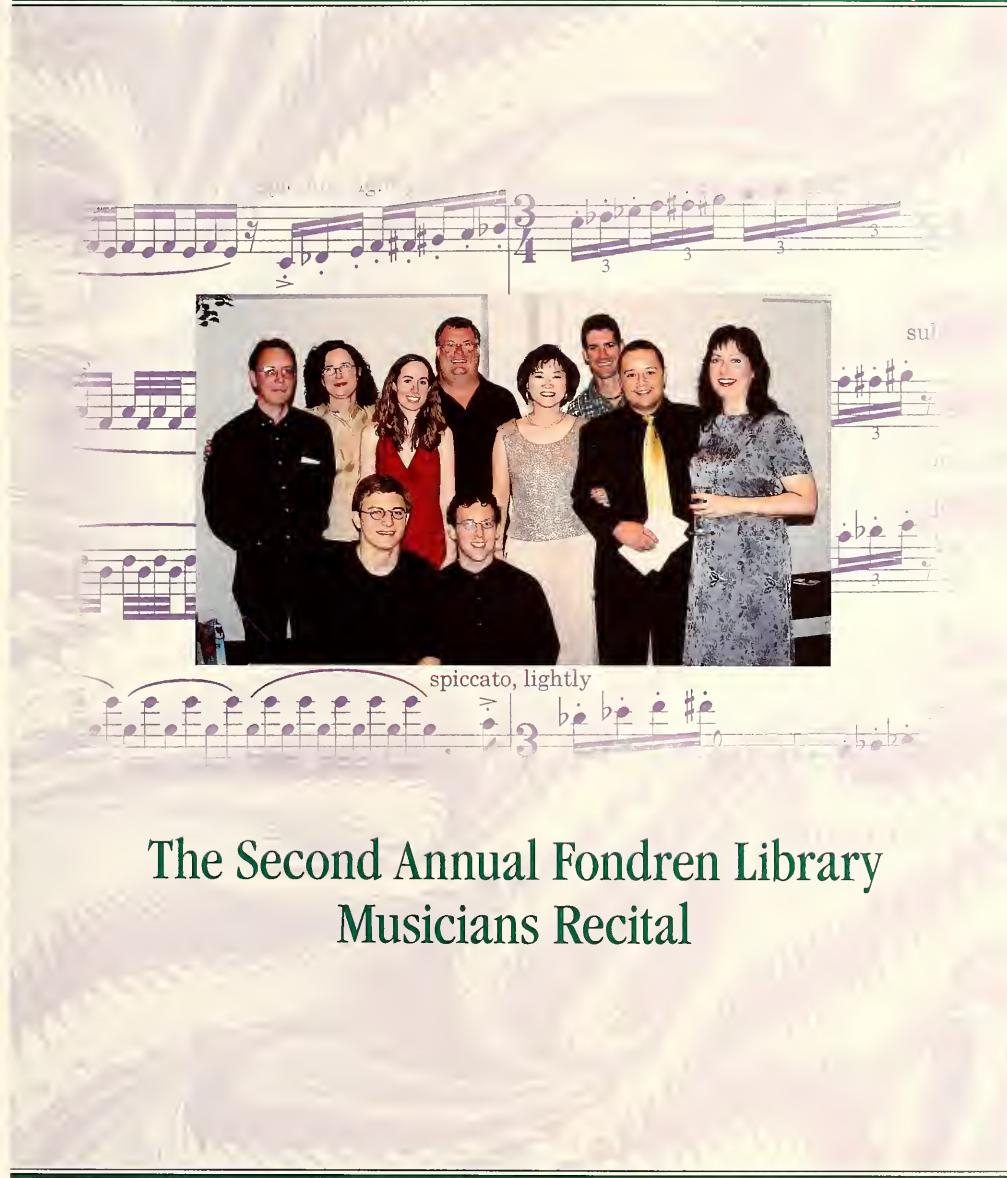


The Flyleaf

Friends of Fondren Library

Vol. 53, No. 3

Spring 2004



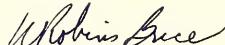
A Letter to Friends

Dear Friends:

It has been my privilege as president of the Friends of Fondren to see first hand how the collective efforts of all of the membership result in (1) very tangible contributions to the collections of the Fondren Library, (2) less tangible but arguably also valuable cultural contributions to the broader Rice community, in the form of public lectures, author recognition, and social interaction in support of the Library, and (3) creation of an interface between the Library professionals and the Library constituency, beyond the university faculty and students. Over the years, the Friends have contributed to the Friends of Fondren Endowment established by Malcolm Lovett and now valued at over \$2 million and also created a Special Collections Endowment now valued at over \$600,000. Your organization has sponsored major appearances by nationally and internationally known authors and journalists. And this year we have tested our communications systems by inviting comments about our dues increase and our organization generally.

Comments were received by telephone, voice mail, email, postal service, and hallway or cocktail party harangue. All were sincere, some were strident, none were stupid. Some of us really don't like the parking changes, although some also acknowledge the improved availability that has come with gates and fees. Some of us could really use Internet access to Fondren's periodical and research resources, but unfortunately the licenses granted with the Library's subscriptions do not permit access as wide as the Internet and the Friends' membership would imply. Some of us were outraged at the dues increase; some were resigned, and no doubt some resigned. Most, however, appear to be willing to acknowledge the need for the increase, the stewardship with which the Friends have conducted their activities, and their willingness to continue to participate. Some have chosen to embrace the enhanced giving levels as an opportunity. The Friends are grateful for all of this participation, whether financial, supportive, or critical. We shall endeavor to benefit from all of it, and we shall continue to monitor the reaction and participation of our constituents to our programs and policies. I personally thank all of you for responding and participating, and for the privilege of serving as President this year.

Sincerely,



Robins Brice

Fondren Library

Founded under the charter of the university dated May 18, 1891, the library was established in 1913. Its present building was dedicated November 4, 1949, and rededicated in 1969 after a substantial addition, both made possible by gifts of Ella F. Fondren, her children, and the Fondren Foundation and Trust as a tribute to Walter William Fondren. The library celebrated its half-millionth volume in 1965 and its one-millionth volume on April 22, 1979.

The Friends

The Friends of Fondren Library was founded in 1950 as an association of library supporters interested in increasing and making better known the resources of Fondren Library at Rice University. The Friends, through members' contributions and sponsorship of a program of memorials and honor gifts, secure gifts and bequests, and provide funds for the purchase of rare books, manuscripts, and other materials that are needed to support teaching and research at the university.

The Flyleaf

Founded October, 1950, *The Flyleaf* is published by the Friends of Fondren Library, MS - 245, Rice University, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, Texas 77251-1892. *The Flyleaf* is a record of the activities of the Friends, the Fondren Library, and the generosity of the library's supporters. *The Flyleaf* is published three times in each academic calendar year and is also available online at the Friends of Fondren web site a www.rice.edu/~fondren/friends



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2003 Distinguished Guest Lecture

BY IRIS LYITLE BALLEW

Alex Jones, director of the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University, delivered a stimulating and thought-provoking lecture for the Friends of Fondren Library on Sunday, October 19, 2003. His title was *"The New York Times: Past, Present and Future."* Mr. Jones, a member of a newspaper family himself, co-authored with his wife, Susan Tifft, *The Trust: The Private and Powerful Family Behind the New York Times*. This highly readable and revealing biography of the Ochs-Sulzburger family, a dynasty which has outlasted all other family-owned newspapers in the country, was a finalist for the 1999 National Book Critics Circle Award. In 1987 Mr. Jones was awarded a Pulitzer Prize while covering the press for the *Times* (from 1983-1992).

In reviewing the early history of the *Times*, he described how the nearly bankrupt Adolph Ochs was able to hoodwink the owners into selling the *New York Times*, then the fifth most influential paper in the city, and ailing. Armed with the credo "All the News That's Fit to Print" he began to build the *Times* by ploughing back all the profits into equipment and by hiring top personnel. One of his ingenious innovations was to establish an annual index of all articles appearing in the *Times*, a sort of bank of retrievable data. Thus was born "The Google of its Day."

A recurring theme of his remarks was his dismay at a prevailing attitude in our society,

especially among young people, of a pervasive will not to know. A recent poll showed that eighty percent of young people admit to getting their "news" from listening to Jon Stewart, Jay Leno, and other comedians on late night television. The networks give us headlines and opinions, but they are poor in reporting facts. Only the great mainstream newspapers

have the opportunity to do in-depth reporting, and it is vital to keep them alive and functioning well. If an informed citizenry doesn't engage in the great issues of our day, democracy will not work.

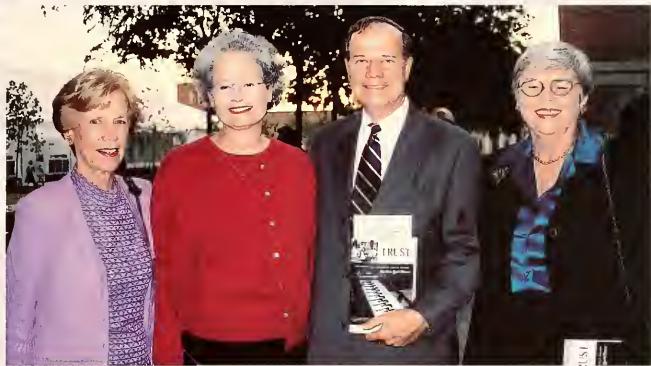
Describing the *Times* as the standard bearer for American journalism, outstanding for its stunning amounts of talent, honesty, seriousness of

purpose and aggressiveness, he admitted it is not without its faults. The *Times* is a place full of pride, complacency, arrogance at times, and with a tendency to ignore criticism, as is true of most great institutions. It is a place shaped by its owners, the Ochs-Sulzburger family who feel deeply the weight of the newspaper's traditions and who have all been influenced by it from childhood.

Following the lecture, which took place in the new Shell Auditorium of the Jones Graduate School, Mr. Jones generously signed copies of his book. The group then gathered for a reception on the Benjamin N. Woodson Memorial Courtyard that offered a very pleasant view of the campus, and Mr. Jones engaged many of the attendees in continuing discussion.



Alex Jones



Debbie Jones, Leslie Davidson, Robins Brice, Iris Ballew



John Boles, Nisha Desai, Cathryn Rodd, Nancy Boles



Connie Bath and Alan Bath, Robins Brice, Alex Jones

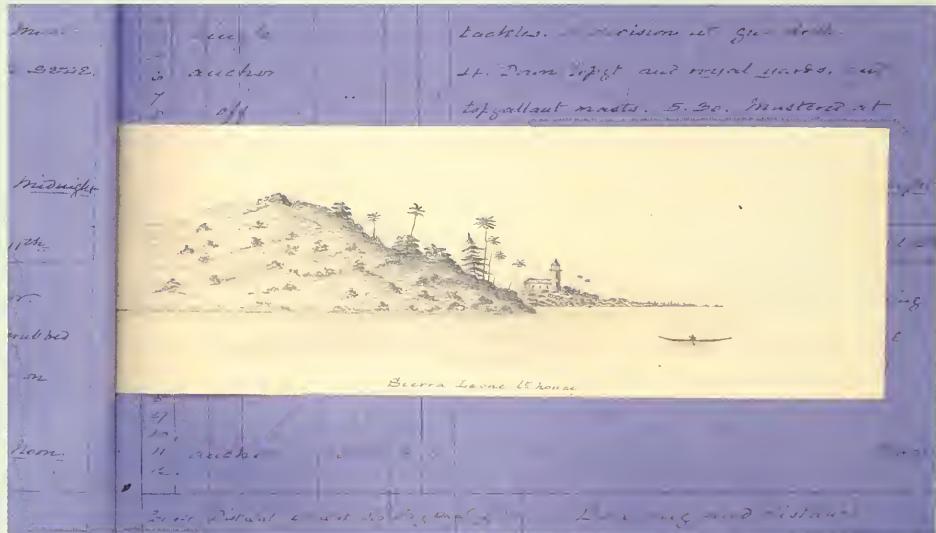
Salt in the Archives

BY ALAN BATH

The recent popularity of the film *Master and Commander*, based on Patrick O'Brian's adventure novels of the British Navy in the early 19th century, has sparked renewed interest in the adventures of the seamen and ships in the days of sail. Snug in the safe harbor of the Woodson Research Center repose several volumes that portray the activities of the Royal Navy in the time of Queen Victoria and before, when the sun never set on the Empire and Britannia ruled the waves.

from the mid 1860s offer tantalizing glimpses of life at sea, as the Royal Navy made the transition from sail to steam.

In March 1864 the British warship HMS *Princess Royal* began a voyage of over two years that was to take her halfway around the world. We are not sure what type of naval vessel she was, since several ships carried her same name at one time or another, but we do know that she was propelled by both coal-burning engines and sails. Usually



Detailed hand-drawing of approach to Sierra Leone harbor, West Africa. HMS Princess Royal.

Beginning in the late 1950s, Fondren librarian and professor of history, Dr. Hardin Craig, Jr. undertook a program to increase the university's holdings in naval history, his specialty. He acquired journals, papers, and ship's logs from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, both American and English. In particular, the British materials dating

she entered and left port using engines for greater maneuverability, then switched to sail in the open ocean to save fuel. The log in the Woodson collection was kept by Charles LeStrange, RN, not the captain, but very possibly the ship's navigator, who not only entered charts of the ship's course, but also added detailed drawings of approaches to sev-

5

Your Drawinge & expē up at 4d a day
And your odd money at 3d man a month
and your lodgē charge is cost at 3d 4d a month.

To know how to cast the Kings wayt
of Cofl allowed to the Pinte, the King allowt
eth the Pinte to be 16 inches for common
enough to keep and a hogg, and will
take the Tenth of his Victualling book
and divide it by 28, and cut off the two
last figures in the quotient, as for example
suppose the Victualling book amounted
to 22400.

2	2	4	0	0	0	8	0	0
2	8	8						
2	2							

Tuns. hoops. baggs.
8. 16. 24.
Multiply your Cofl by 2 and it
makes your hoops and 2 and then ~
makes your baggs.

6

His Majesties Allowance
of Victuals at Sea to each xx
Man per Diem.

Bushell. 1 ^{lb}	Munday. Beer.
Beer. 1 Gall.	Thursday. Bisket
4 pces Beef. 2 ^{lb}	Sunday. Beer
2 pces Pork. 1 ^{lb}	Tuesday. Peas.
Pease. 1 Pint	Wednesday. Bisket
	Thursday. Beer
	Saturday. Bisket
	Cheese.

Siz'd Fish } 16 inches } Fish } ^{1/2 part of a sal't}
long. } or part of a quill. } of a quill

Butter. 1/2 ^{lb}
Cheese. 4

When no Pork in store

Beef 3^{lb} in lieu of 2^{lb} of Pork or Beef
1 Pounds in lieu of 1^{lb} of Pork and
1 Quart Pease.

Food allowance tables for Royal Navy, 1661-1692

eral bays and harbors along the track.

Preparations for the trip commenced many days before actual sailing, 19 March 1864. Provisions were loaded, coal and water for the boilers topped off, and the Royal Marine contingent embarked. Ammunition magazines, empty while in port, were filled.

Although commanded by a captain, *Princess Royal* had a rear admiral aboard, whose duty it would be to exchange visits of courtesy with local senior officials during the ship's "show the flag" stops at foreign ports. In the two year period covered by the log *Princess Royal* visited South Africa, India, Ceylon, (Sri Lanka), Siam, Hong Kong, China, and Japan.

The descriptions of shipboard life in this and the other Royal Navy logs in the Woodson are much the same. Once at sea the days were filled with training exercises, drills, and shipboard housekeeping tasks. Saturday, 22 March: "Scrubbed hammocks and washed clothes." Sun-

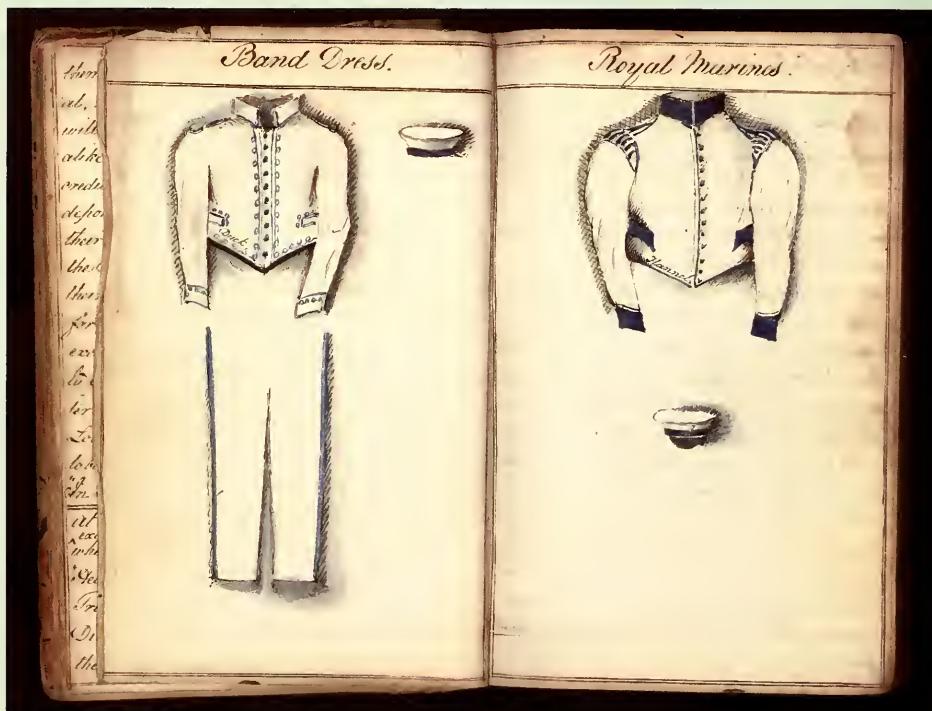
day, 23 March: morning "Divine Services," afternoon, "Making and mending clothes." The log reflects periodic issues of soap, tobacco and "slops" – items of regulation clothing and cloth – to the crew, as well as a small, monthly, money payment. Most of the crew's wages were kept on the books for final pay-off at the end of the cruise. There were also minor adventures. 17 November: Sighted a steamer and "fired a gun to enforce the steamer showing her colours." 22 November: "Wm Aldrid fell overboard. Stopped and picked him up. Proceeded."

Life was harsh in the Royal Navy and death not uncommon: 25 April, "Punished Denis Donovan, RM, with 36 lashes, as per warrant." 10 July: "Death of a seaman." 11 July: "Body committed to the Deep." 10 November: "Alfred Parker attempted to destroy himself by cutting his throat." It was not always smooth sailing. 7 August: "12:30 Split main topsail; 12:40 Main topsail blown to ribbons." There were, however, lighter moments. When the

ship crossed the Equator on 20 April the log noted the arrival on board of "Neptune," and the next entry indicated the ship stopped while "Neptune employed christening his children on their crossing the Equator for the first time."

The first leg of the voyage took the ship southward to the British naval base at Simonstown, near Capetown, South Africa, with stops at the Portuguese colony of Madeira and at Sierra Leone, West Africa. When in foreign ports gun salutes were fired in honor of the nation's flag, upon the arrival onboard of local dignitaries and, if the visitor were of sufficient importance, the ship was "dressed"—that is multicolored signal flags and pennants were strung from the mast tops to the ship's bow and stern as a festive display. In most ports the crew was divided into groups and given highly limited shore leave. In British ports or naval bases the

routine was less formal, but gun salutes were still exchanged between the visiting admiral and the local governor or senior official. Once anchored in a British harbor the daily routine changed. Sick crewmembers were sent to hospital. Roman Catholics were allowed to attend Mass ashore. Working parties were landed to reprovision the ship with all necessary supplies and, if there were a shipyard, to replace damaged masts and sails carried away in stormy weather. Boat crews and landing parties were exercised and the marines sent ashore for target practice. The last few log entries deal with landing the ship's fire brigade and marines to help fight one of the many conflagrations that regularly plagued the city of Tokyo. LeStrange's final entry, on 9 December 1866, has the ship still in "Yedo Harbour" (Tokyo Bay). We do not know when she returned home, or by what route.



Dress uniforms. HMS Melville, 1837



Track of HMS Princess Royal. Red track: steam. Black track: under sail.

The Royal Navy's exquisite attention to detail is illustrated in another of the Woodson's holdings, the Order Book of Captain W.D. Paget, RN, master of HMS Melville during 1837-1838. He first lists the ship's allowance of officers, sailors and marines, 432 in total, indicating a large man of war. The ship was allowed one schoolmaster, presumably to instruct the some 50 midshipmen and "boys" on board.

There is an inventory of "Bibles, Testaments and Psalters" issued to each mess. A mess generally consisted of groups of like persons living and

eating together, such as the officers mess, midshipmen's mess, gunners mess, etc.

The bulk of the book is given over to standing orders for the various occupations on board, such as band members, non-commissioned officers, sentries, and the like, setting forth their duties precisely. Each sail on the ship is listed, as is the name of each crewmember assigned to the sail, and detailed instructions for bending on and reefing individual sails are provided. Also spelled out are procedures for mooring and unmooring the ship and a list of responsibilities in case of fire. Finally,



SIMON'S BAY

Simon's Bay Harbor, South Africa.

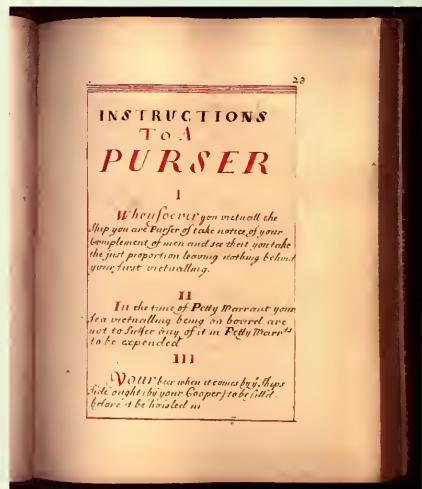
and perhaps of greatest interest to the crew, were the rules for issuing Grog -- the traditional rum and water drink of the fleet.

Attention to detail began at the top. The Woodson holds a copy of *Lists of General Expenditure for the Admiralty use, 24th April 1661-2nd November 1692*. Set forth are the daily, weekly, and monthly pay and special allowances for each officer and enlisted grade. Royal navy ships were divided into categories from one to six depending on the number of guns carried, and pay varied according to the class of ship. For example the master of a Category One ship received basic pay of seven pounds per month, while master of a Category Six only three pounds, six shillings.

Much of the book is given over to instructions to purrs, those officials involved in the procurement and issue of food rations to the various ship's messes. How much to order, what to pay, and how to account for each food staple is detailed. Advice on How to Estimate Supplies was included. "Multiply your men by your days and that makes your **Bread**. Divide your **Bread** by 240 & that makes out your **Beer**. Divide your **Bread** by 7 & that makes out your **Beef** and **Pork**. Divide your **Beef** and **Pork** by 32 & that makes out your **Pease**." Intel-

ligence on foreign men of war one might encounter is also given in the form of lists of ship names and guns carried by the French, Dutch and "Algeria" navies of the day. Finally, there is a list of all the ships of the Royal Navy, their squadron assignments, commanders, number of guns and men.

Throughout history ships and the sea have held a strong emotional pull. Patrick O'Brian recognized it in writing his Aubrey -- Maturin series. Professor Craig felt it in helping Fondren Library acquire the significant collection of maritime documents it now holds. We salute both.



British Admiralty instructions for provisioning ships, 1661-1692.

The Fondren Concert

BY KAREN HESS ROGERS

On a warm Sunday afternoon in August, Friends of Fondren Library, library staff, and other members of the Rice community gathered to enjoy the second annual Fondren Library Musicians Recital. Eleven current and former members of the library staff and a guest cellist entertained the audience in Duncan Recital Hall with selections from Liszt to Debussy to Chinese folk songs. Already familiar with the exceptional musical talent of these performers, the audience was captivated again this year.



Jiun Kuo, Robert Estep, Barbara Shreffler



Guests at the reception



Standing left to right: Robert Estep, Barbara Shreffler, Laurie Thompson, Keith Chapman, Jiun Kuo, Chris Windham, Jorge Cavazos, Mary Du Mont. Kneeling: Brent Auerbach and David Bynog. Not pictured: Herb Durlam.



Keith Chapman and Mary Du Mont

Following the concert, members of the audience mingled and congratulated the musicians on their remarkable recital while enjoying cool refreshments. The Friends of Fondren Library looks forward to sponsoring this annual event for many years to come.

We hope you will enjoy reading the brief biographical sketches of the musicians:

Brent Auerbach

Brent Auerbach is currently enrolled in a Ph.D. program in Music Theory at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. He is currently writing a dissertation re-examining the analytical methods of Arnold Schoenberg as applied to the music of Brahms. Brent was, many years ago, an active performer both of piano and oboe, taking many state awards on the former instrument and performing in school ensembles (The Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra in Boston, MA) on the latter. Now his focuses are research and teaching theory; this semester, for example, he is an adjunct faculty member at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville. With the exception of the occasional recital, he now usually plays for his own enjoyment: hence the focus on Bach and Brahms. Brent is a circulation assistant in the Brown Fine Arts Library.

David Bynog

David M. Bynog received his Bachelor of Music from Louisiana State University where he studied with Jerzy Kosmala and his Master of Music in Viola Performance from Rice University where he studied with Csaba Erdelyi and Roberto Diaz. He has performed extensively throughout the south with many orchestras including the Baton Rouge Symphony and the Lake Charles Symphony and has appeared as soloist with the Laredo Philharmonic Chorale Orchestra. David is currently the assistant head of the Acquisitions Department at the library.

Jorge Iran Cavazos

Jorge Iran Cavazos began his music studies at Houston Community College and then went to the National Conservatory of Music in Mexico City, Mexico. He then finished his language requirement at Rice University and studied privately with Dr. Joyce Farwell. In 1999 he received an academic and music performance scholarship from The University of St. Thomas where he received his degree in music. Jorge currently works as Sirsi database analyst for Fondren Library.

Keith Chapman

Keith Chapman works as the music catalog librarian in Fondren Library. He received a BM in Piano Performance from North Texas State University and an MM in Piano Performance from Rice University. He earned his MLS from the University of North Texas in 2001. His current musical activities include serving as the assistant conductor/vocal coach for Opera in the Heights and on the music staff of St. Martin's Episcopal Church. In the past he has worked for the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, the Houston Boychoir, and the Houston and Dallas Ballet Academies. He has also served as music director for numerous musicals in Houston, Galveston, and Dallas.

Mary Du Mont

Mary Du Mont received her Bachelor of Music in vocal performance from Northwestern University. She was an active performer in the Chicago area for several years, and sang regularly with Light Opera Works of Evanston and Chamber Opera Chicago. She later received her Master of Library Science and Master of Arts in Musicology from Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, and continued to perform at KSU and in the Cleveland/Akron area with such groups as the Robert Page Cleveland Singers, Cleveland Opera, and the Three Arts Club. She relocated to Houston in 2000 and is now the music librarian at Rice University and an occasional performer in the Houston area.

Herb Durlam

Herb Durlam is both an electric bass player and drummer-percussionist. He has been performing for more than thirteen years in a variety of different styles including jazz, rock, ambient-noise, and more. Herb has toured and recorded extensively around the world including Europe, New Zealand, and Canada. Herb plays Fender basses exclusively through SWR amplification and plays various drums and percussion instruments (anything that makes noise when he hits it). Herb is currently working on the inventory project in the Database Management Department.

Robert Estep

Robert Estep taught himself the rudiments of electric guitar by playing along to LPs and by 14 had joined the first of a long line of rock and roll bands, first in Washington, D.C., then in Austin, Texas, and finally in Houston. His early influences were Chicago blues and the psychedelic scene from San Francisco, especially the live improvisations of Jefferson Airplane and Quicksilver Messenger Service. By his third band Robert had begun writing his own material, in an effort to avoid the drudgery of cover bands and from then on was the principal songwriter for any outfit he was associated with. Among the bands in which he played, those he looks back on with greatest affection are the Vamp Till Readys, Banks of Apollo, Frayed Minks, and Sons of Dada. Robert is the lead copy cataloger in the Technical Services Department of the library.

Jiun Kuo

Jiun Kuo participated in school and community choirs while in grade schools and college. She also belonged to a folk band while in college. She is familiar with traditional Chinese folk songs, as well as more contemporary pop songs, with a special focus on harmonies and duets. She took piano lessons at a very young age, learned to play the guitar in high school, and took violin lessons in recent years. Jiun is currently head of cataloging at the library.

Barbara Shreffler

Ms. Shreffler worked at Rice University for seventeen years, fourteen of which were in the Cataloging Department of Fondren Library. She now works as a director of constituent strategies for Baylor College of Medicine in fundraising. She is also a professional violinist and mandolinist. She has been a member of the Houston Ballet Orchestra since 1983 and has also performed with the Houston Grand Opera, Da Camera, Ebony Opera, the Houston Symphony, and numerous other venues. Favorite groups she co-founded include The Blue Moon Quartet (eclectic acoustic music makers) and the

Houston String Quartet. Her favorite group for the future includes all good music made with her friends at the Fondren Library. Ms. Shreffler earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Violin Performance from Illinois State University in 1981 and went on to earn a Master of Music degree from Rice University in 1984.

Laurie Thompson

Laurie Thompson graduated from New Mexico State University in May of 2002 with a B.A. in History and a Minor in Music Performance for Flute. She participated in Marching Band, Symphonic Ensemble, various chamber music ensembles, and several state and national competitions throughout college. She has been on staff at the Circulation Department in Fondren Library for almost two years.

Chris Windham

Chris Windham, a member of Fondren Library's IT department, began taking piano lessons at the age of 5. At the age of 12, Chris discovered the double bass. Studying under Thomas Lederer at Southern Methodist University, Chris graduated with a Bachelor of Music. He later went on to Rice University where he graduated with a Masters in Double Bass Performance under the direction of Paul Ellison. He has performed in various music festivals and events around the world including the 1986 World's Expo in Vancouver, BC; the 1993 WASBE [World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles] convention in Valencia, Spain; the North Carolina School of the Arts 1994 Tour of Europe; the 1995 National Repertory Orchestra in Breckenridge; and in the 1996 National Orchestral Institute in Baltimore. He has also played in the presence of high-ranking officials such as former US Army General Norman T. Schwarzkopf and President George Bush. He has been on staff in Fondren Library for the past six years.

Friends of Fondren Honor Texas Anderson at Annual FOFL/REA Homecoming Brunch

The Friends of Fondren Library and The Rice Engineering Alumni held its always popular and well-attended Homecoming Brunch on November 8, 2003. The event was ably chaired by Lee Duggan, Jr. '52, and the Friends chose Texas Anderson as the 2003 recipient of the Friends of Fondren Library Award. The award is presented each year to an individual who has been an outstanding supporter of the Friends and the library, and those words are certainly true of Texas.

Karen Hess Rogers, immediate past president of the FOFL board, stood in for President Robins Brice and welcomed the attendees. She introduced Fayebeth Little '98, president of the Rice Engineering Alumni, who presented the 2003 Outstanding Young Engineering Alumnus Award to John D. Miner '89 and then presented the 2003 Outstanding Engineering Alumnus Award to William N. Sick '57, '58.

Mrs. Rogers introduced Dr. John Ribble who made the award presentation to his good friend Texas Anderson '81, '85. His remarks follow:

Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.

Thomas Alva Edison

Texas Anderson has never missed an opportunity because of shirking work. She has

participated in every area of endeavor sponsored by the FOFL. Participation is too gentle a word. Many times she has led the efforts – chairing the Book Sale, chairing the annual Gala in 1996, leading the solicitation for both the live and silent auctions, editing the Friends'

publication *The Flyleaf* and contributing to it, working at the Book Sale, and serving as president of the Friends of Fondren in 1998-1999. Even though Texas is taking a short breather from serving on the board of the Friends, she is still at work – as a major force in planning

and staging the Gala which will honor President and Mrs. Gillis.

Not only does Texas work hard in everything she is associated with, she continually thinks of new initiatives. Not just an idea person but a "really good idea" person.

Texas has also worked for the benefit of the University as a whole. She has served on the Graduate Council and the Association of Rice Alumni Board of Directors chairing its Nominations Committee. In May of this year the Association presented her with the Meritorious Service Award in recognition of her generous and significant voluntary contributions of time, energy and creativity toward the enrichment of Rice University.

Texas is proud of her three high-achiever sons. She is a successful business woman, a voracious reader and provocative conversationalist and a faithful friend.



Texas Anderson, John Ribble, and Karen Rogers

One of Texas's outstanding traits is her determination and tenacity. When she supports an idea or a project -- watch out. At those times we all should heed the admonition we frequently read on our highway signs -- DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS.

It is a great honor to present Texas Anderson with the FOFL Service Award!

Dr. Ribble closed his remarks with a delightful limerick written for the occasion:

It's becoming a part of the lore
That Texas is right at the fore
For her service to Rice
One award won't suffice
The Friends honor Texas once more.



John Miner, Fayebeth Little, and William Sick



*Rebecca Catlin, John Ribble, Texas Anderson,
Fran Catlin, Anne Ribble*



Barry Wood, Betty Wood, and Lee Duggan

A Great 2003 Book Sale!

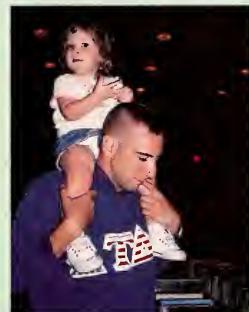
Fun photos from the three-day sale.....



John Hunter, Pamela Giraud, and Karen Rogers



Pat McGinty



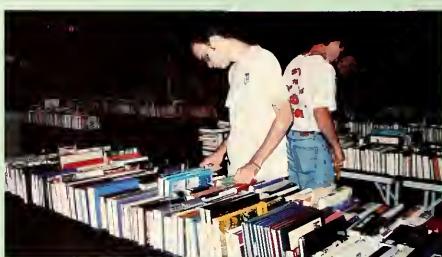
A future customer...



....And more future customers



Browsers...



....And more browsers

The Friends of Fondren extends a big THANK YOU to Teddy Adams for chairing this year's event. The board is already making plans for the 2004 Book Drive and the 2005 Book Sale. If you would like to donate books, call the Friends of Fondren Office at 713-348-5157.

Reminiscences of a Reader

BY BETTY WOOD

"Not all readers are leaders, but all leaders are readers."

I saw this famous quote by Harry Truman on the wall when I visited Key West and the Little White House. It occurred to me that he is absolutely right.

How tragic it would be to be unable to read. I read every night before I go to sleep, and I can't fall asleep unless I read. I wonder how I ever got to sleep the first six years of my life, before I learned to read. Being able to read brings me great joy. When I'm in the middle of a good book, it's very difficult for me to do anything else. One weekend when our children were little, I was reading *Blood and Money*. I just climbed in the bed and started reading. (I knew most of the characters). I didn't climb out again until I finished the book (about 36 hours). Barry, my husband, kept cruising by the bed with the children in tow, and saying, "Betty, what did you have planned for lunch (or dinner)?" And "What did you have planned for the children to do?" To every question I answered, "Nothing. Leave me alone." So he finally gave up.

I had a court reporting business for 30 years. I was taking the deposition of a deck hand who had caused a large wreck in the Ship Channel. The lawyer asked him, "Didn't you see all those signs that said, 'Danger! Turn back!'" He said, "Shucks, man, I can't read." The lawyer told me that this guy was one of ten children who lived across the street

from an elementary school, and their parents never found the energy to take them across the street to school. If I were bottled up in a two-bedroom house with ten children, I would insist that they go to school, to maintain my sanity.

When I was at Rice, I took a course from Dr. McKillop called "The Novel." You've heard of speed reading courses? This was a slow reading course. All the books we read were 1400 pages long, and the exam questions were something like, "What color tie did Mr. Smith wear on Tuesday?" (Mr. Smith being a minor character.) But I really learned to pay attention and comprehend what I was reading. I read during all meals, at traffic lights, while walking, and while bathing.

Reading in the bathtub was, and still is, one of my favorite pastimes. My husband used to bring me a martini in the bathtub, but I got allergic to alcohol in my old age, so now I just read, sans the martini. I have been known to go to sleep and drop the book, which would fall in the water with a loud splash, and wake me up. These books usually start out being about one-half inch thick and end up being about four inches thick, all damp and swollen.

When I graduated from Rice in 1949, I had a choice of being a nurse or a teacher. I fainted at the sight of blood, so I had to be a teacher. Other jobs were simply not open to women at that time. I was a fourth grade teacher for five long years. I had 43 children

in my room, five bright, five not so bright, and the rest average. With my personality, I wanted to spend most of my time with the very bright, but the intellectually challenged were also the discipline problems. They were the ones who poured milk on the other children's heads and cut up their pictures, etc. One of these told me that he was going to be a famous artist, and all he wanted to do was paint. I wouldn't let him have any water to paint during reading and arithmetic, so he would spit in his paints. I finally succeeded in teaching him reading and arithmetic by telling him, "You will want to learn to read so you can read about other famous artists, and you will want to learn arithmetic so you will know what to charge for your paintings, and how to make change when you sell them." It worked! I spent many hours of my own time and a fair amount of my money finding easy-to-read books for him on Rembrandt, Leonardo da Vinci and Picasso. But this kind of effort, plus coping with the other 42 children in my room, took its toll on me. I had a nervous skin rash that started every September and ended every June, so the dermatologist finally ended my teaching career. I took early retirement at age 25.

Starvation motivated me to consider becoming a court reporter. The classes cost \$7,000 and took two years, so I bought

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May 1, 2003 – October 31, 2003

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Reminiscences

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the instruction books and a used shorthand machine for \$15.00 and taught myself how to be a court reporter in just a few months. And thus began a new career, which was interest-

ing, lucrative, and satisfying, and one which I enjoyed doing for 30 years. Then, when I was 60, I developed a hearing loss and had to quit reporting. Once again, I took a bunch of courses and read a bunch of books, and taught myself how to be a humorous and inspirational writer and speaker, a career which I am still enjoying

today, at age 74.

I am happy that I learned to read, and I am especially grateful for my wonderful Rice education. So I will close with this quotation by John Adams. "Education makes a greater difference between man and man than nature has made between man and brute."

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Mark your calendars now for upcoming Friends of Fondren Library events.

Tuesday, May 25, 2004

The Friends of Fondren Annual Meeting will be Tuesday, May 25, 2004, at Cohen House. The evening will begin with a reception, followed by dinner and program.



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